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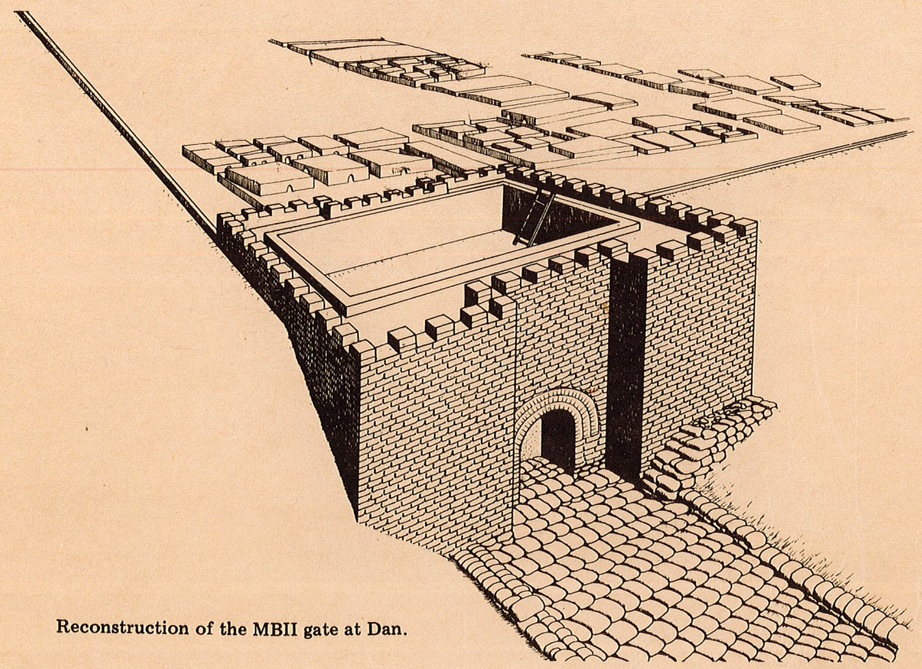

Reconstruction of the MBII gate at Dan.

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KHIRBET ZIKHRIN — 1982

A first season of excavations was conducted in May-June and August-October 1982 at Kh. Zikhrin (map ref. 1466/1634) on behalf of the Department of Antiquities and the Archaeological Survey of Israel. The work was directed by M. Fisher, from the Department of Classical Studies, Tel Aviv University, with the participation of A. Feldstein, S. Pipano, Ronit Steinberg, B. Davies (area supervisors), Daphna Steiner, Orna Toledo, Semadar Harpaz (registrars), I. Segal, R. Teicher and L. Yaffe (surveyors). A. Kindler served as numismatic advisor.

The site is situated on a hill overlooking the eastern Yarqon basin, above the southern bank of Naḥal Shilo, about 1 km south of Migdal Ṣedeq (Crusader Mirabelle, Arab Majdal Yaba) and about 6 km southeast of Aphek. The Roman road from Jerusalem through Gophna and Antipatris to Caesarea passes nearby, as well as the Mameluke "postal road". At present, it is difficult to identify the site with any settlement appearing in literary sources. It is mentioned by Guérin and in the Survey of Western Palestine, and in recent years has been visited by the survey team of Tel Aviv University.

The site extends over an area of about nine dunams and comprises building remains, cisterns, oil and winepresses. About 100 m to the south and about 150 m to the east are groups of rock-cut tombs and burial caves, some with decorated entrances. The remains of a mausoleum were discovered to the southwest, comprising rock-cut tombs sealed by a masonry wall. All the tombs are of the *arcosolia* type. Terraces on the southeastern slope of the mound are evidence of early agriculture. The site was surveyed and areas were excavated in the western part of the site and beyond the limits of the settlement.

Survey. A narrow road bisects the settlement leading north to Migdal Ṣedeq. The houses cluster in the center while the numerous industrial installations were found in the margins. The central building is located on the highest point of the site, which seems to have been unfortified. The houses are large, with one or two courtyards containing cisterns and industrial installations. The sherds collected on the surface are from the Hasmonean, Roman, Byzantine, Arab and Mameluke periods.

Area A (the acropolis). Four building phases could be distinguished. The first (1st century CE), in the northern part of the area, consisted of rock-hewn pits, some of which were remains of quarries and others fragmentary industrial installations, including a reservoir (diam. 3.0 m, depth 2.5 m) with three steps. The fill in these rock-cuttings contained fragments of terra sigillata, lamps of the 1st—2nd centuries CE and coins of Herod Archelaus and Agrippa I. The remains of an oil press and a stepped installation with a sump also belong to this phase, and may perhaps represent the remains of a 1st century farm.

In the second phase (4th—7th centuries CE), a large structure (40 × 30 m) was excavated in the center of a building complex. Its portico (9 × 8 m) had carved corner pilasters and decorated columns with bases in the Attic style resting on a stylobate. Many stones fallen from arches were also found. One of the rooms uncovered in the eastern and southwestern part of the building complex contained a covered cistern connected to a plastered clay drainpipe. Five steps led from the courtyard to a rock-hewn cellar surrounded by rock-cut and plastered cisterns.

Three groups of industrial installations were excavated: in the north, a surface paved with mosaics; in the east, a rock-cut oil press with drainage channels; in the south, another oil press, with a pressing surface and collecting pit, and nearby a treading surface paved with mosaics (winepress ?). The finds include a stone mortar and fragments of ten store jars.

In this phase, the rock-cut pits of the first phase were filled with earth and stones and a plastered floor was laid over them. Late Roman sherds, Byzantine lamps and coins of the 4th century CE, furnish a date for the building complex. The finds include carved capitals with crosses, and a marble fragment decorated with a cross and a wreath, indicating that the complex may have been a monastery.

In the third phase (8th—14th centuries CE), use was made of the earlier buildings. Cisterns and reservoirs rested on the stylobate and its stones were reused. The reservoirs were built of small stones with plaster and one reservoir was vaulted. The pottery includes white wares with plastic decoration, moldmade wares of the Mefjer and Ramla types, and many painted and glazed sherds.

In the fourth phase (from the 16th century onwards), an earth and stone fill containing many architectural fragments covered the entire area. This fill was enclosed in a wall built of large stones on the outside and small stones on the inside, and a fill mixed with cement between them. The northwestern section of this wall adjoins the western part of the Byzantine complex. The area was paved with large stone slabs, incorporating ovens and mortars (some of which were originally doorjambs and bases from the Byzantine building) and storage installations. The finds include glazed pottery, pipes and coins.

Area D (about 100 m south of Area A, on the fringes of the settlement). The remains of a Byzantine building were uncovered. From the street, a doorway led into the southern courtyard and from there into the northern one. Two cisterns and a winepress plastered and paved with mosaics were also exposed.